

The novel virus continues to challenge our Nation and the world, so we must be prepared. I urge the Senate to pass necessary additional funding for COVID-19 relief so Americans can continue to face this challenge head-on and prevail.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE A. SCOTT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this evening, I want to take just a few moments to recognize Pittsburg State University President Steve Scott. His long tenure at PSU—over three decades in total—has shepherded the university through various challenges and a period of growth.

Since taking the helm as president in 2009, he has led through a recession, enrollment and recruitment challenges in a global pandemic.

Early on during the pandemic, as our world was shutting down, I hosted a Crawford County virtual check-in with area leaders. President Scott was on that Zoom call. It was one of the many Zoom calls we have made over the last several years. During that conversation, President Scott said that there were three things to do when leading during difficult times: One, tell the truth; two, give people hope; and three, tell people how they can help. That advice has stuck with me and has helped guide my work and my conversations with Kansans ever since, and it is good advice that we can follow yet today.

But President Scott's legacy is not only marked by challenges. Pittsburg State has seen tremendous growth and opportunity over the past decades: the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, Block22, the expansion of the Overman Student Center, the Plaster Center, and many other positive developments.

These encouraging things highlight his emphasis on being a good community partner and his success in further integrating the university with the city of Pittsburg, Crawford County, and the region.

If you have ever been to Pittsburg on game day to cheer on the Gorilla's football team, it is clear how well the university pulls the community together.

I have always enjoyed walking through Gorilla Village with President Scott to visit with students and community members—with "Welcome to the Jungle," of course, playing in the background.

It is during these events that it is clear how well he relates to students, how much he cares for them and enjoys hearing their goals and their dreams or, for graduates, what they have accomplished since leaving campus.

I am of the view that we change the world one soul, one student, one person

at a time. Education is one of the most impactful ways we can do that, and I appreciate President Scott's dedication to serving students for the past 30 years.

I also appreciate how closely he has worked with me and my staff to advocate for Kansas higher education and identify ways the Federal Government can invest in the campus to move both Kansans and Kansas forward.

President Steve Scott will be celebrated this Friday in Pittsburg and step down from his position as president in June, but before he does so, I want him to know how grateful I am and Kansans are for his service.

He is a public servant through and through, and I look forward to seeing what he does next. Whatever it may be, I wish him and Cathy the very best.

President Scott, thank you for your friendship. Thank you for making a difference in so many lives. We are grateful for what you have done at Pittsburg State University. Best to you and your family.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. PORTMAN. I am here on the floor today to talk about border security, an issue that is intertwined with our national security and, certainly, with the drug epidemic that we see in our communities around the country. We are in the middle right now of the worst border crisis in the history of our country.

This chart tells the story.

Monthly border crossings are at an unprecedented level. Customs and Border Protection reports that there were 164,973 encounters at the border in February. By the way, that is equal to the population of Dayton, OH. Actually, it is far greater than the population of Dayton, OH.

So we have never had this kind of illegal migration into the country—this many people being apprehended. They told us last week that they are seeing over 7,000 migrants per day in this month, in March, and this is while something called title 42 is in effect.

What is title 42?

Well, despite these really big numbers you see here in terms of the number of people being apprehended at the border, under what is called title 42, which is a public health authority—it has nothing to do with immigration, really. It is about public health, and it is in place because of COVID-19. It allows the Customs and Border Protection folks to say: Sorry, you can't come into the United States for public health reasons. And, therefore, they can be turned away.

So that order is in place right now. Here is how that has worked. If you look at this chart, you will see the people who have been turned away because of title 42, in orange. Those are the numbers in orange. Those who have been allowed to come into the country are in blue.

You will see here, at the end of the last administration, in the Trump years, when we had for the most part a secure border, we had very few illegal entries. We had about 75 percent of the people who were coming in who were turned away by title 42.

In this administration, it is closer to about 50 percent. About 50 percent of the people are being turned away by title 42.

Why is this important? Well, obviously, we are making progress on COVID. COVID-19, we all hope, is not going to be here forever. There may be another variant out there, but as we are relaxing mask mandates and telling people that they don't have a vaccination mandate anymore to be able to come to work or travel across our borders, we are hearing reports that the Biden administration may rescind title 42, so get rid of this authority within the next several weeks.

And do you know what? Unless we have a new variant, God forbid, that comes in and causes a new health crisis, they are probably right. Title 42 shouldn't be used in this way because it is a public health authority, not an immigration law. The problem is that if that happens—remember, we already have an unprecedented number of people coming into the country. Look at this chart. If that happens, then all these folks who are being turned away—the orange bars here—are going to be coming across the border also without title 42 in place to have them be turned away. This is why the Border Patrol tells me—and I know the Presiding Officer hears the same thing all the time—that they are already overwhelmed. But they say it will be out of control.

Now, some may argue it is already out of control. But it is going to get a whole lot worse. So they are worried on the border, and rightly so, that the current crisis is going to become far worse.

My two colleagues from Arizona, both Democrats, to my understanding, have just asked President Biden to keep title 42 in place. And I think that makes sense to keep it in place right now because we are not ready for a huge increase of migrants coming across the border. We can't handle the current wave. The information we received from the Department of Homeland Security is that they are planning for a massive increase of migrants when this happens.

I am the ranking Republican—the top Republican—on the Department of Homeland Security oversight committee, called the HSGAC Committee, or Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee. We are talking to